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WORKERS' AUTONOMY

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing contrast between the real workers' movement and their 'official' spokesmen (parties of the left, trades unions, etc.) is a direct consequence of the latters' failure to fulfil their professed task of freeing the workers from exploitation. Every day that passes demonstrates to whoever wants to see it that these organs have no intention of challenging the basic structure of capitalism, and are now making quite unashamed appeals to the workers to make sacrifices, accept unemployment, wage cuts, increased prices, and so on, in order to save the economy for their employers.

Strangely, those who seem most reluctant to see things as they are, are the conscious minority where even anarchists are still discussing whether or not we should be 'working within' the trade unions, or proposing to build alternative but essentially similar structures. It is to this minority that we propose the following articles. The subject is not new, but is being experimented daily in the immense variey of trials and errors put into effect both at individual (absenteeism, sabotage, etc.) and mass (wildcat strikes, rent strikes, squatting, etc.) level, by those who suffer the brunt of exploitation directly: the low paid workers, the unemployed and other emarginated minorities, those for whom autonomous organisation is not a choice among others, but a necessity at the very level of survival.

This leads to the problem of the role of the anarchist minority within the workers' movement. Does the anarchist, refusing the role of leader or vanguard, have a role to play within the mass movement? This is a problem that needs going into in depth. There seems to be a fear among many anarchists to do so, often leading to situations of total inertia even in the face of struggles where an anarchist presence would be of considerable significance.

The direction our work takes is conditioned from the start by our attitudes and analyses, no matter how unsophisticated these may be. In recent years the libertarian movement has come to take for granted certain assumptions concerning the working class and the struggle against capitalism, which if gone into can be found to have their roots in the Marxist theories. This has led to workerist attitudes (idealisation of the industrial worker, disdain of minorities and the so-called 'lumpen proletariat', and an economistic vision of the class struggle), and sterility of ideas and action. It is not a question of theoretical purity, but the more serious problem that the means we use condition ends to be attained.

This is the main theme of the first article, where Alfredo Bonanno questions the 'scientific' and 'rational' Marxist analyses, reminding us of the great influence which Hegel had on Marx throughout his work, and the not inconsiderable 'idealist' element which this alimented. In the place of Marxist metaphysics we must employ our efforts in developing a pluralistic analysis based on concrete factors which are constantly modifying the relationship exploitation/struggle. But as comrade Bonanno continues, we must take into account not only the objective causes of oppression, but must also examine the subjective factors which play an important role in the persistence of exploitation and are hindering the process of workers' autonomy. One of the main factors is what he defines the 'religiosity' of the masses, causing them to sollicit a 'guide' or leader. Another subjective obstacle in the path of workers' autonomy, and therefore of social revolution, is the set of moral values inherited by the industrial workers from the bourgeoisie, which creates a division

between skilled and unskilled or unemployed workers, and exalts the work ethic, guardian angel of production.

In the two articles that follow, prepared by the comrades of Kronstadt Editions, the essential theme is the role of the anarchist minority in the autonomous struggle of the workers. If this could once be considered that of working to build syndical structures or workers' councils, time has demonstrated how these organisms cannot reach a truely revolutionary perspective, but remain tied to a precise vision of the economy (that of a quantitive consideration of production), and their perspective as organs of counter-power. The concept of workers' autonomy bases itself on a qualitative change in human relations, not a simple change in the ownership of the means of production. This involves taking in a global vision of the struggle and not restricting it to that of the factory or the demand for more jobs, hence the concept of 'territory', covering in addition to the work-place, also the living area, the school, the land, and so on. Within this global reality every individual finds his or her dimension through direct struggle, without passing through the intermediary of party or trade union.

The ever important question is raised again: are these struggles a natural, spontaneous process, or is there a place, a need for the presence of a minority with a revolutionary consciousness to work within this movement, not as a vanguard, but in order to stimulate moments of direct action and clarification.

The comrades of Kronstadt Editions go into this problem in some depth. They consider that a distinction should be clear between the actual mass organism (the spontaneous organisational form which grows around a specific struggle), and the specific one (that made up of anarchist comrades with the aim of stimulating such moments). There can of course be times when the two merge, but, as they point out, the distinction should be clear at the outset in order to avoid possible mystification or illusions.

Another point they raise is that autonomous struggle cannot be imposed from the outside (as it would then be autonomous in name only), but there must be a disposition within the people in a given situation to act in such a way. The work of the revolutionary minority is therefore not that of trying to form autonomous mass organisms, but rather that of measuring the potential for such to come about, and trying to increase that potential through actions which are relative to the situation. Needless to say, the phenomenon of workers' autonomy is attracting the attention of parties who feel the way the wind is blowing and have an interest in trying to insert themselves within this movement in order to instrumentalise it. This is another place where anarchists come in: to expose such attempts, and for this we must be clear ourselves, and wary of subconscious attempts to see it as a potential for the growth of some fictitious anarchist movement.

The fourth article, by the autonomous movement of the Turin railway workers, the MAB, is a document which has grown from a concrete situation, an attempt by some of the railway worker comrades in that area to organise in the form expressed in the document: in autonomous workers' nuclei, free from the interference of trade unions or parties.

Problems have been raised in this pamphlet which until now have found little space in anarchist publications. We hope that this attempt will lead to further dis cussion on the problem of autonomy.

Jean Weir

AFTER MARX, AUTONOMY

The road ahead of the proletariat is blocked: the reformist parties, trade unions and employers have coalesced to obstruct any growth in the level of the struggle, or any conquests which could lead to a revolutionary transformation of production relations.

The proletariat have only one alternative: that of building communism directly, passing over the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic structures. In order to do this we must provide analyses of and realise in practice, elements organised by the base at the level of production: autonomous workers' nuclei.

These nuclei must not, in our opinion, be confused with the company, the factory, etc., but their concept must widen to a global vision of factory, living area, school and land.

Within this globality the idea of autonomy must be re-interpreted by the working class and related to the autonomy of each individual, element of constant reference and correction of any tendency to construct the former at the cost of the latter.

Here the action of a minority which has acquired a revolutionary consciousness has its place: to point out the ever present dangers of bureaucratisation, any involution towards the control of the struggle by a minority, certain corporative tendencies intrinsic to the workers' movement, and all the other limitations which centuries of oppression have developed.

Their very delicate task is therefore that of fusing together struggle and organisation, uniting them in daily praxis. This requires analytical clarity in order that the second should be maintained within the usable limits of the first, and to prevent its autonomous essence being destroyed by the organisational aspect, leaving it in name only.

Not negligible, finally, is the work of the active minority concerning the problem of gaining information, essential element for the emancipation of the working masses and their control over the elements necessary for their liberation: the demolition of all constituted power, and the communitarian management of the means of production.

If once the possibility of revolution could be confused with the simple expropriation of the means of production (on which the Marxist ambiguity rests today), we now know with certainty that the bourgeoisie themselves are disposed to transforming their property titles so that exploitation can continue under another guise. The "smooth" passage to State socialism is the most widely diffused prospect among the "pro-

gressive" circles of the bourgeoisie.

Against such a prospect the working class must build the means necessary for the struggle and the recapture of a revolutionary perspective.

WORKING CLASS AUTONOMY

The analytical individuation of the working "class" is a complex problem. Usually comrades like to refer to even the most sophisticated of the Marxist analyses, coming through with all possible glory by affirming that they intend to limit the "use of Marx" to the strictly indispensable (usually identified with the economic analyses), for the construction of the true libertarian perspective of workers' autonomy and their struggle.

Frankly, I have never been able to do as much. Perhaps for reasons derived from my profound aversion to metaphysics, and perhaps, given the character of my studies, I have learned to detect the smell of metaphysics a long way off. And such a large part of the Marxist analyses, even in economy and historical methodology, stinks of metaphysics. That is why, as far as is possible, I mean to avoid doing the same.

As the great founder fathers themselves have admitted, the themes of the problem of class are not their "invention". They, and Marx in particular, limited themselves to relating the existence of classes to certain precise historical phases in the development of production, from which, with a considerable logical jump, they drew the conclusion of the ineluctability of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the consequent mythology of a transition to the classless society.

I have often heard Marx's "realism" exalted, it being identified in his refusal to lament on the "immorality" of society, and in his analysis of exploitation and the chapter of accidents of the class struggle as a necessary process leading to the liberation of society, therefore a salutary and evolutionary process. We do not see anything "scientific" in all that. Marx could not follow his predecessors such as Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen and Sismondi for two good reasons: he believed in revolution (in his own way) and had studied Hegel (whom he never digested, in spite of all his youthful criticisms). In this way he managed to found in his "systematic" brain, the realism of the propagandist and political journalist and the optimism of the metaphysician who identifies rational with real.

What bewilders us most is that anarchist comrades often do not real-

ise that they are fully subscribing to a programme which has its roots in the German protestant mysticism of the Middle Ages (see Hegel and his debtors), a philosophical Middle Ages which still today insists on a pretended difference between "class in itself" and "class for itself". The passage is the awakening of consciousness; the point of departure the objective situation obtained by the distribution of private property. Sometimes the awakening of consciousness is made to coincide with class organisation.

Apart from the metaphysical premiss, the only concrete fact here is history. For the first time, with great clarity and analytical explanation, Marx manages to free reasoning on Man from all religious, biological or evolutionary idealisation. What remains is man in history: no small feat, seriously wasted, however, by the "rationalising" pretension of enclosing it within the "romanesque" atmosphere of the phenomenology of the spirit (albeit it upside down). In this way the justification of the history of man emerges from the dialectical process placed within a fixed structure. History is rationalised through a metaphysical process, in the same way as it has been done by other historians with just as much need for "a point of reference", using the dominion of religion or the evolution of the species. Once history is "rationalised" historical reason ceases to be "absolute reason" (as it was for example for the theoreticians of the old democracy) and becomes "dialectical reason". Rationality becomes a new wrapping for an old parcel, enabling it to be sold off as new goods. But old or new, these goods are always a product of "Metaphysical & Co.", supplier to all the "Royal Houses" of the world.

Certainly the old "absolute reason" had lost favour. To re-interpret the world with its measure would have been a very difficult and easily discreditable operation, as were the attempts of the ingenuous materialists of the first half of the nineteenth century, romantics in love with matter and its metaphysical "sensations", incapable of tearing the vicissitudes of Man from their absolute periodicity: exploitation/rebellion, and again exploitation, and again rebellion. Obtusity of history on the one hand, obtusity of its interpretors on the other. This blessed spirit's path did not want to move in a progressive direction: exploitation continued to grow again after the revolt, the workers' blood bathed the streets with a constance that gave some with a sense of humour the idea of foretelling revolutionary cycles.

Nevertheless, in spite of such poverty of means and pollution in the few basic ideas, Marx managed all the same to go beyond the useless

production of his time, uniting optimism and realism in a remarkable reconstruction, even though lacking in many aspects and requiring some fundamental changes. One of the most defficient parts is precisely that concerning the problem of "class". It is not a coincidence that the unfinished manuscript of *Capital* stops precisely here.

For we anarchists the problem should be quite clear. Any reasoning of the kind "thing in itself" should not interest us. Who the devil "class in itself" might be does not strike us as being an important problem, in fact it does not seem to us to be a problem at all. How this "class in itself" could become a "class for itself" seems to us to be a joke in bad taste. Let us leave such "typographic jokes" to professors of philosophy and reason more simply, keeping to the facts.

We do not know, nor do we want to know, whether there exists a class in itself. What does interest us is to know that there exists a power structure. This macroscopic fact, which goes all through history, cannot be denied. In this way history can be said to be marked by power, and the various transformations it has undergone in order to persist as such. But such reasoning would begin to smell of metaphysics in that it would lead us to the question: is it power that determines history, or something in history which determines power in one form or another? Let us leave such reasoning aside. History is marked by many events which are more or less constant throughout its development: the State, religion, production, sex, the struggles of the exploited. In fact it would be impossible to construct an historical development of any one of those elements, thereby giving us a history based on the State, religion, production, sex, the struggles of the exploited, etc..

And let it not be understood that we believe possible a military history, a history of religion, an economic history, a sexual history, and a history of the struggles of the exploited. We know, like everyone else, that history is an indissoluble unity. We are only saying that, for the sake of argument, it would be possible to single out the above mentioned elements.

That proves, or at least it seems so to us, that it is always possible to construct an exterior model, whether it be dialectical (the metaphysical model), idealist (the religious model), materialist (the economic model), or descriptive (the empirical model): but that also proves that such work would be quite useless.

For anarchists, history is all these elements together, and many other things besides. We can also include irrational and metaphysical aspects: they too are history, and although from time to time they should be

isolated and condemned, not for this can they be eliminated. If we did otherwise we should fall into two indissoluble alternatives, such as that between ideas and action, or the other way around. In practice all that does not matter to us: we can leave such work to the philosophy professors.

This exhortation places us before a last metaphysical obstacle: should we ask the meaning of reality? (This is no idle question. Marxism is due much credit for having managed to camouflage it by postponing it to infinity). Reality is at the same time power, religion, production, sex, the struggle, and many other things as well which we do not remember or which we do not know. What matters is not interpreting it in its totality (which would be the metaphysical model of "thing in itself") but interpreting the important elements, useful for the construction of a programme of action.

Every attempt at analysis should have this end in view. Let us take an example, starting from the model which takes into consideration the struggle of the exploited, a constantly recurring fact in history. The common lot of these struggles is to be reabsorbed by the State. This process, which has cost millions of lives and incredible suffering, has not killed the will to struggle.

We thus have two elements: the struggle, and the will to struggle. Now we must ask why this struggle has constantly had a negative outcome, and what is significant about this. The first point can be partly explained by the presence of a minority "leading" this struggle, a minority which, if on the one hand takes itself as being the "head" of the movement of the exploited, on the other adopts the role of "ascending elite", that is a minority which intends to take power itself, taking the place of the elite who were previously in charge. There is another, more profound reason for the first point: the persistent "religiosity" of the exploited masses, hence their "need" for a "guide", a group or a person capable of materialising their desire for vengeance. This leads us to the second point: what significance should be given to the constant negative outcome of these struggles? The conclusion is linked to the discourse on the autonomy of the individual. Only the will to freedom, at the same time the fruit of and the reason for the struggle, can eliminate the sentiment of religiosity still intrinsic today to the struggles of the workers.

This model might explain the great flood of reformist and authoritarian parties, in that they become, in our opinion, the symbol of vengeance. The masses see in these organisations the sacerdotal caste and

church which will lead to their millenarian dream. For their part, the bureaucrats of power (the trade unions should be included in this argument) who present themselves as ascending elites, have every interest in exploiting this sentiment, while their very nature prevents them from stimulating any initiative towards a process of liberalisation.

But the sum of these struggles in the course of history can be seen as a progression. Certainly we must not fall prey to the progressist illusion, but in our analysis, the acknowledgement of a certain progress is based on observable facts. For example, the reduction in working hours and improvement in working conditions are objectively progress compared to previous situations, although they can become a part of a process of recuperation, rendering the struggle just as necessary as before. What matters here is the obvious fact that this process transforms the type of religiosity in a situation of exploitation. To the old religiosity instrumentalised by the Church, we can compare today the lay religiosity instrumentalised by the political parties. The paragon is useful and allows us to see the differences.

If the identification of the class of exploited is vague and cannot be otherwise once we have deliberately left history and, as we shall see, reality in the realm of vagueness, on the other hand we now have the possibility of using pluralistic elements in our analysis which would otherwise have remained irremediably outside it in the case of an a priori choice of a precise system (for example, dialectics, religion, economics, metaphysics, etc.). If the construction of the analytical model is more difficult, the richer should be the result of its application, it not having to work either towards the construction of a party, nor in defense of a pre-established order.

A rough conclusion would be one linking the working class to a progressive elimination of the religious sentiment which gives rise to the need for a "guide". Every attempt to do "for oneself" is for us a sign of acting in first person on the situation of exploitation. The struggle, taken in itself, as the phenomenon of an amorphous mass more or less sensitised under the teachings of a church or party, is not enough to define a class. Nor is the process of production, taken as a whole, as a precise repartition of the ownership of the means of production excluding a part of the human race, enough to define a class.

Marxists can also speak of class "consciousness", the term does not worry us. But not for this should we be drawn into their philosophical arguments on this pseudo problem. We have often said that the autonomy of the individual is determined by his or her acceptance of res-

ponsibility in making decisions concerning his or her life: this responsibilisation can also be called "consciousness". It would be preferable to define it "will". The will to do for oneself, the will to intervene in first person, the will to break the spellbound circle of religiosity, the will to overturn tradition, the will to break with orders from above: in a word, the will to build one's own autonomy. And it is here that the discourse on the autonomy of the individual meets that of the autonomy of the working class.

THE ACTIVE MINORITY

The conclusion of working class autonomy comes to us, as we have seen, from the impossibility of breaking through the counter-revolutionary circle in any other way. That this impossibility is supposed to be due to a pretended historical process is something which does not concern us. Workers' autonomy is not another philosophical "form" like so many others, it is an objective necessity. Workers must look after their own interests: the religious stimulus towards a delegate to take care of their interests must be fought.

Here a question arises. What determines the birth and development of the autonomous organisation of the struggle within the working class? Is it automatic, a direct consequence of the impossibility of a revolutionary outlet due to the "holy alliance" between capital, parties and trade unions? Or does a precise minority exist, acting within the masses, developing a progressive clarification of the dangers, obstacles and possibilities: i.e. pushing the masses to act for themselves?

The most exact answer would be an illustration of the two factors alongside each other. But in practice the most serious problem which arises is that of the precise historical character of the industrial proletariat, and their "hegemonic" role in the revolutionary perspective. It would seem to some that without the birth of the industrial proletariat the tendency towards autonomous organisation would not have come about. We find such reasoning curious for two reasons: first, it insists on giving the industrial proletariat the historic role of "guide", and proposes an illogical alternative in history, the possibility of a "non-existence" of the proletariat. But the proletariat do exist. Industry and its development have their place in history, the industrial revolution determined the birth of capitalism and this has evolved to the present day as we know it, and shows clear signs of going in a certain direction. All this leads to a simplification of our problem. A large part of the

working class today are made up of the industrial proletariat. They are directly linked in their class configuration to the development of the industrial revolution, which is logical. But we do not understand how from this we can pass to the affirmation that the industrial workers must play a predominant role over the rest of the working class. Not only that, we do not understand the second question: why autonomy must only come about within the industrial proletariat.

If we admit such reasoning, we must admit that the crisis of capitalism is a "mortal" one, and not one of "transformation". If the industrial proletariat are the most sensitive edge of the working class, they would also be the most fitted to perceiving the sickness of capitalism and of opposing it with a specific form of struggle, i.e. autonomous organisation. The other strata, for example the peasants, not being immediately in contact with the privileged stratum of production, would not heed these stimuli, and the possibility of autonomy would not arise.

It does not seem to us that capitalism is in "mortal crisis". On the contrary, it seems to us that its strength is as lively and vigorous as ever. Its very obvious crisis is manifesting itself as a passing one, an evolution towards a very different type of capitalism, far more capable and efficient than that of the present time. Therefore we cannot speak in terms of a "final crisis". Nevertheless, a tendency towards autonomous working class organisation does exist.

In fact, the present position of the reformists (parties and trade unions) is not a "response" to capitalism's "final crisis" any more than proletarian autonomy is. The collaboration of the unions and parties is not a new strategy, but is the normal response from developing institutions to those in power. They would like to destroy the latter, but must allow them to subsist so that the changeover can come about with the least possible damage to the structure, otherwise the ascending elite, when they come into power, will find themselves with a heap of rubble in their hands. This is the real position of the reformists. In the same way, working class autonomy intended as the remaining possibility of the struggle, is not derived from capitalism's "final crisis", but is part of the constant attempts of the class to free themselves from exploitation. In this sense we can see how workers have always looked for new and autonomous organisations in contrast to preceeding ones (out of date or absorbed by the system), with the aim of surviving or fighting, and we can also see how these organisations have been consigned into the hands of the ascending elite, reached power, and denied the autono-

mous instance of the base of the workers.

We must study more closely therefore this mechanism of "consigning" autonomy into the hands of the "leaders" and guiding parties. We must examine the causes of this "religiosity", irrational motivations which act on and become a part of the structure, the lack of self-confidence which seems to afflict the masses, throwing them into the hands of the reformists.

We have asked what the role of the active minority should be within the perspective of working class autonomy. The conclusion is a constant measuring of the forces which determine the failure of class autonomy, i.e. the forces we have perhaps incorrectly summarised as "religiosity" in order to underline their irrational essence. It is impossible to theorise in abstract the formation of an anarchist minority group acting on the masses beyond the level of their own interests. What we can agree on is the essence and content of these interests. The smokescreen drawn by the reformists is hindering a proper evaluation of the workers' interests far more drastically than the brutal power of the employers and the fascists has done in the past. Social democracy's alliance with the employers is the worst immaginable obstacle in the path of the workers' freedom.

We must therefore establish a point of reference for anarchist action within the region of workers' autonomy. This can be found in the latters' objective interests, the clarification of which constitutes an initial contribution by the anarchist minority. But this does not mean within the perspective of "leadership" which, even if adopted by the most orthodox anarchist tendency, would finish by tracing the path of social democracy, agent of the power structure. It means on the contrary, action within the workers' movement itself, action starting from the concept of autonomy and autonomous organisation concerning the workers' interests, and linked to that of individual autonomy relived through the class perspective of revolutionary liberation.

The failure of so many concrete instances is that the action of anarchists, if clear at a certain analytical level, often errs in the choice of means, a decision which raises the whole question of ends to be attained. To attack the project of the parties and trade unions requires a clear idea of the means to be employed in the struggle, and not just a blind postponement to the spontaneity of the workers. The question of autonomy is not separate from the question of the choice of means in the struggle: the two are linked, and condition each other in turn. The violent perspective, direct action of the workers such as sabotage, the des-

truction of work, etc., are not actions "more to the left" than some other supposedly left wing action. They are precise choices dictated by autonomy of interest, choices where the active presence of anarchists is of very great importance.

We must now stop and reflect carefully on the problem of the workers' "interests". If they were to emerge, as in the Marxist analysis, from a concrete situation—the dominion of capital—one could speak, with a logical effort, of "interests in themselves", corresponding to "class for itself". But these interests are only really those of the working class on condition that they recognise them as such and manage to overcome the obstacles deliberately constructed by the State, reject the false proposals of the reformists, and so on. In other words, we see a voluntaristic aspect in the autonomous action of the workers, an aspect which reaches the centre of the "objective" interests of the class, but only on condition that this is obtained through struggle and sensitisation. And it is here that the positive action of the anarchist fits in.

To become aware of one's own interests, a subjective rediscovery in objective form, is the essential condition for the verification of social revolution without a preventive passage through State communism.

Another aspect of anarchist action in the region of autonomy is that directed towards the clarification of the relationship with power, from which emerges the solution of the problem already mentioned, of the religiosity of the "guide".

Power does not solidify in one precise point of the forces of reaction. Substantial differences emerge between capitalists, bureaucracy, middle class and petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and other elements within a very complex framework. No less substantial differences exist between parties in government, reformist parties, trade unions, the repressive organs of capital (army, police, judiciary, fascists, etc.). But beyond the specific differences in constitution and employment, all these forces are united by the basic need of every power organisation: survival. They struggle in the first place for their own survival and self-perpetuation in the situation which makes their existence possible; then, to render this survival easier, they pass to the phase of development and the desire for even greater dominion.

That the Marxist doctrine is the expression of a certain middle class aspiring to power and the overcoming of the final obstacle separating them from it, is an attractive and valid hypothesis, but one which needs to be gone into more deeply in our opinion. We cannot agree to see this as purely something to be found in the attitudes and interests of the

middle and petty bourgeoisie. An equally important reflex exists in the irrational residual within the working class, and which permits the development of the interests of that intermediate class aspiring to power. In this case the ascending elite is not the whole of the middle or petty bourgeois class, but a minority among them, the political parties and trade unions, who define themselves the representatives of the interests of the workers and the less financially endowed bourgeoisie.

It is for this reason that the actions of anarchists in terms of an active minority, should not define them as a vanguard sensitive to a certain level of struggle, authorising them to represent the masses. This would open the way to violent action as an end in itself, with the pretence that it could sollicit the workers' movement from outside as a consequence of certain actions "exemplary" in their very isolation. The very principle of workers' self-management and direct action as the patrimony of the exploited masses, and not the prerogative of a minority, would come into contrast with such a partial vision of the revolutionary task.

RELATIONS WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS

The "religiosity" which we have spoken of is not the only characteristic of the working class. This is more a basic sentiment than a precise element, something irrational persisting within the class, and which finds its origins in exploitation itself. It is concretised in the demand for "vengeance", a kind of millenarianism which accompanies every kind of religion, and in the positive evaluation of certain principles– shared with the enemy–and which the latter are accused of having profaned.

Let us take an historical example. In the Middle Ages the German peasants rose up against the lords and the Church, demanding vengeance for the suffering and privation they had always been subjected to, but at the same time asking for the restoration of the Christian principle of poverty and morality in custom, profaned both by the lords and the Church. They were fighting therefore in the name of a desire for vengeance, hence put themselves–with great reticence in this case–into the hands of a leader, in the name of a moral code shared by the exploiters who were considered profane by the people.

Today, changing the conditions of production and the composition of the classes involved in the social conflict, these relations remain constant within the working class. First of all religiosity, then morals. The first is the essential condition for falling once again into the hands of an

elite aiming for the conquest of power and denying the existence of autonomy; the second is the condition for operating a radical selection within the working class itself, establishing the existence of a privileged strata which can then be the first to be instrumentalised by the ascending elite.

The reason is simple. The moral values of the shop-keeping bourgeoisie persist within the working class. On this basis a division exists between "skilled" and "manual" workers, between professionally qualified workers who have a decent "honourable" socially esteemed past, and those who live from day to day, the so-called rabble, usually present in the large cities. Marxism, typical product of the moral mentality of the bourgeoisie, has always insisted on this point, relegating the lumpen-proletariat to the margins of the revolutionary discourse, considering them with suspicion, washing their hands every time they find themselves obliged to approach them.

More serious is the fact that this is not only a literary component belonging to the priests of the Marxist church, but is also a common sentiment among the mass, one of so many factors of corporate origins which, out of interest, has not been fought by the reformists. The latters' collaboration has in fact hindered any action capable of confronting the State with a non-recuperable situation of conflict.

We thus have: religiosity in general, which determines the acceptation of a leader identified in the ascending elite, and the moral residual which causes a deep division within the autonomous movement of the workers, laying the foundations for their instrumentalisation by the future power structure.

The first consequence of this moral residual is the refusal of every spontaneous tendency in the organisation of the struggle, any recourse to illegality, any action beyond the "canons" of the current morality, artfully exploited by the bourgeoisie for many centuries. The division within the workers' movement causes a division in the choice of strategy to be used in the struggle. The indiscriminate condemnation of the use of criminality is a notable example of this perspective.

We do not want to take up an argument here which would require going into in great detail. We only want to say that the seeds of bourgeois morals, if not eradicated in time, are serious enough to cause a fracture of considerable importance.

Going into the problem we realise that if the "religiosity" of vengeance is essentially a fruit of exploitation, therefore belongs to the class of producers themselves, the bourgeois moral conception is not a

fruit of exploitation, but reaches the class of producers through their contamination from the petty bourgeois class not easily distinguishable from themselves.

All the models which fill the Marxists' pages certainly do not help to clarify this distinction. The petty bourgeois class consists of shop-keepers (distribution), administrators (control), and police (repression). Shop-keepers represent the traditional bourgeoisie with their antiquated forms of distribution, and are in the process of being transformed, at least in the advanced capitalist countries. Their moral thought is diffused among other strata, for example the skilled workers. The administrators represent the part controlling the circulation of surplus value extracted by the capitalists. This is the most obtuse and retrograde class, the one most tied to a vision of life based on values of the past, and careful to defend the privileges they have obtained up till now. In the growing phase of the State's contractual strength, this class identifies with the bureaucracy. The policing class cover all the elements of repression. Included in this class are the politicians, trade union officials, police force, priests, and all those who live on the margins of the producing class, repressing or helping to repress any instance of revolt. All these brave people exalt and guarantee the continuation of bourgeois morality. The stratum of privileged producers, approximately identifiable with the industrial proletariat by their situation and privilege, finish by accepting these morals, imposing them on the lumpen-proletariat with their negative judgement.

In the same way the ideology of work and production is imported from the class of the petty bourgeoisie. The work ethic, typically bourgeois, again covers a large part of the producing class with its essential condition: the safeguarding of production. Clearly those who have most interest in the diffusion of such an ideology are the bourgeoisie themselves and the strata who safeguard their existence. An instructive parallel could be drawn between bourgeois morals, the ideology of production, and Marxism. In any case we cannot deny that even this aspect constitutes a great problem, alimented by the specific interests of the bourgeoisie and the parties in their service.

But relationships within the working class are marked by constant changes in production relations. The analysis of the latter enables us to identify the development of defense against exploitation within the class as this exploitation, although constant, does not always express itself in the same way. The workers defend themselves and attack their exploiters, but this struggle and offensive take on different aspects in

relation to the development of accumulation, accumulation in the sense of the ultimate result of capitalism.

Today, within the very complex structure of advanced capitalism, it would be a mistake not to see clearly the interdependence which exists between the producing classes of different countries due to capitalism's links at an international level. This interdependence exists at two levels: first, as unequal exploitation depending on whether capitalism is in an advanced or an underdeveloped stage, and secondly according to the unequal development of capitalism within one country. The relationship between centre and periphery at world and international level, conditions relationships within the working class.

In Italy we can see a certain type of relationship in force between employers and producers, but we cannot crystallise this in one model valid for the whole of the country. In the first place we must see its relationship to the international situation. Secondly, we must see it in relationship to the South of Italy. For this reason the autonomous structure of the struggle must not close itself within the manufacturing dimension, but must include the situation of international and national conflict.

The problem is not an easy one. Many comrades have seen it only to be a problem of political equilibrium. To us it seems that although it remains a political problem, it also presents the important technical aspect of how to organise the struggle from an autonomous point of view. Let us try to go into this a little further.

The groups of producers who, as we have seen, are making plans for a struggle based on autonomy, i.e. the refusal of an intermediary such as parties or trade unions, must know the productive capacity of the manufacturing or agricultural complex, and how to adapt their struggle in relation to autonomous management based on the choice of production perspectives (rational distribution of work). To do this it is necessary to know that surplus-value can be formed outside the manufacturing and agricultural situation, extracted directly through the situation of under-development in which a part of the national territory (or a part of the world) is being maintained. In other words, the economic calculation based on autonomy, and therefore the very possibility of a future communist form of production, and the basis of the autonomous of struggles today, must bear in mind not only profit extraction at the centre of the capitalist complex, but also that which is reached through the simple existence of a centre and a periphery. The colonialist and imperialist situation opens vast horizons for recuperation and communist accumulation (not to be confused with the capitalist or

State-capitalist kind), which must be clarified in order to understand that autonomy is not only a contingent factor, a way of building the struggle, only to consign it into the hands of an ascending elite, but is a new way of conceiving production relations, a revolutionary way of completely eliminating surplus value derived from exploitation.

But the presence of a periphery is not only an objective fact, it brings in subjective reality as well: men and women who suffer incredibly, exploited like beasts, who die of hunger. Men and women who live from chance, stamped with the infamous brand of criminality. This constitutes a whole explosive area which capitalism at a national and international level is hunting down with police and army, cudgels and bombs, with every means and no pity. But this is at the same time a periphery which is managing to open up the road towards a new society considered far nearer than is normally believed, because it is not seen through the deforming lens of "professionality". They are beginning to rebuild the faith they had lost, a faith which comes into contrast with "religiosity" and those who instrumentalise it: the parties and unions.

Not to bear this dualistic reality in mind, means not to understand that even autonomous action can fall into the contradiction of particularism and racism. Even the revolutionary workers' councils, if composed of workers closed within their "specialisation", not opportunely vitalised by the presence of an active minority who are against the idea of party or union—expressions of a manufacturing centre which looks with disdain upon the under-developed perifery—can before long turn into imperialist workers' councils, anti-room of instrumentalisation by the parties and of an even more terrible form of exploitation.

ALFREDO M. BONANNO

WORKERS' AUTONOMY: SURPASSING TRADE UNIONISM

At a time like the present where national trade union disputes are developing, it might seem natural to some comrades to insert themselves within this movement with alternative claims or platforms aimed at radicalising the collision on contractual problems, in an attempt to expel the trade union leadership, the Communist Party and the neo-reformist groups. But this type of action has nothing to do with proletarian autonomy.

The only possible way to put the workers in the direction of direct action is to go beyond the logic of disputes and collective bargaining. The struggle for better wages and demands for investments (especially in cases where it is necessary to reduce production) are areas where the bourgeoisie can create strata of workers' consensus and impassivity in order to impose restructuring, and the attempt to lead disputes in the direction of the workers' interests results in increasing faith in contractual instruments.

In the face of a complex and many-sided restructuring of industry the reasons for which are compound (increasing production in some sectors, a complete elimination of it in others; adapting to technological change, or returning to old and proven methods of exploitation), it is absurd to move in an optic which defends trade unionsim whose pretence of confronting general problems is only a façade for creating equilibrium within the capitalist system.

Now that the supernational bourgeoisie find themselves managing the economy in a speculative and substantially unproductive key, it does not make sense to think one can fight them by "imposing" investments and new consumer channels. When restructuring leads to mass redundancies, to reply with demands for employment and a union "guaranteed wage", enters the schemes of bourgeois interest: many promises, some money right away, which is taken back through other channels, and so go the plans aimed at weakening the proletariat's capacity for resistance, and re-enforcing the economic structure.

Demands for work by the unemployed invariably result in not getting a stable job, at the most a short spell in a government sponsored scheme, to be used as direct or indirect blackmail against the employed workers.

Even recent proposals such as a reduction in working hourse to 35 hours a week, if inserted in the line of the refusal of work, are objec-

tives of no real consequence in that capitalism (far more elastic in its structure than it was in the past) can impose major exploitation even in situations of reduced working hours.

Left-wing trade unionism can at best put the bourgeoisie in difficulty, but is not capable of even scratching their positions of strength, whereas the autonomous actions of the proletariat need to move on more immediate foundations, allowing the development of certain concrete forms of struggle which can be experimented daily.

The real and unifying moments for the class, where it is possible to mobilise in first person, exist in the contradictions inherent in working conditions in the factory and those of the proletariat in general, in the territory (physical region of exploitation), in the structures of production and consumption, the factory hierarchy, politics, administration, the police, fascists, work pace, pollution, mobility, prices, rents, bills, etc.. Direct action, the self-conscious struggle of the masses, can only be born from the aspects of every day life, not from abstract programmes or platforms. Class initiative must be concrete and managed in first person, without the mediation of the trade unions or parties. These struggles, apparently minimal, in reality represent the first step on which to base a new consciousness and organisational practice starting out from the contradictions suffered daily in individual situations within the organisation of work and consumption, and progressively approaching the more general confrontation, always getting closer to the roots of class oppression. The logic of proletarian autonomy is therefore one of sporadic growth, hence there can be different levels of autonomous expression.

One of the main points of this discourse is the smallest element of mass organisation: the mass organism, which by its very nature does not comprise the whole class in a given situation, but is strictly tied to experiences of direct action. These organisms are formed by the masses during particular struggles and the moments of awareness and reflection preceeding and following them, not by discussions by groups on the problem. The more they merge with and become an internal element of the mass movement, the more effective they become, sometimes without realising it. The validity of their activity can be verified in their absorption in successive mass actions capable of developing or surpassing the indications they have provided. These organisms should not be considered a form of counter-power, alternative unions directing groups or parties, all denominations which are more or less conscious-

ly transmission belts of some ideological regroupment. Mass organisms are one stage in autonomy, but they always represent partial aspects which can be surpassed. They are the first point of reference, but their function always remains relative to precise situations. Their initiatives therefore do not represent the needs of the whole of the proletariat of which nevertheless they are the expression. Their institutionalisation in the party sense is therefore impossible without changing their very nature.

There was a period when a superevaluation of mass organisms led to a wholly organisational vision of the problem of autonomy, resulting in a passage to autonomous trade unions, and where proletarian autonomy came to be reduced to trade union autonomy. We must examine therefore the whole process of autonomy, where the intervention of the active minority (specific organisms) should not be directed towards the formation of organisms of the mass, but towards stimulating moments of direct action, the only thing capable of expressing true proletarian organisational forms.

Even the most violent encounter with economic contradictions does not necessarily lead the proletariat to find a solution in direct action. That is a fact which we see evidence of every day. The most recent examples are the response to the elimination of industrial plants, redundancies, and increased dependence on social security, which has usually been in the form of the now old practices of meetings open to all the democratic forces, mediation with the government and local authorities, etc.. Mass direct action is therefore not an automatic reply, but is the result of a process which comes about through a fairly slow and not easily tangible process of maturation. The dialectical process existing within the masses is capable of working out certain forms of retaliation, even repeating the same experience more than once before surpassing it, transforming a simple lack of faith in reformist structures into the capacity to attack.

The action of comrades of the active minority must therefore be in the optic of a re-entry into this process, gathering the indications put forward by the masses, and carrying them forward as analyses and information useful for the struggle. Often the classical instruments for spreading proposals are disdained (posters, leaflets, wall writing, etc.). Every now and again someone makes the great discovery that they are useless, that instead one "must remain within the situation", or that things must be discussed directly, etc.. But that is not a problem. Posters, leaflets, newspapers, discussions (or even the actions of the so-

called "vanguard") are simply instruments, and what is important is the use that is made of them. If one is simply going to say "long live autonomy", "ahead with direct action", "no to repression", and other such meaningless remarks, then they are clearly senseless. Nor is it enough to single out concrete issues (e.g. piece work, contractual work, wages, prices, etc.) in that the fact that the problem exists is not enough, but there must be a disposition for it to be received. There must be a synthesis therefore between the proposition, and the situation of real potential for direct action.

The functioning of the specific organism, or active minority, is subject to a series of contradictions which do not always render the relationship with the mass easy. The reason for these contradictions lies in the fact that most often these organisms are formed not as a result of a thrust of direct action, but are due to theoretical sedimentation concerning the experiences of proletarian autonomy. It is possible though, that after prolonged activity, mass organisms can evolve into specific ones, just as it can happen that comrades of the active minority can participate in the functioning of mass organisms. This produces a fluidity of organisational forms within the process of autonomy. Many comrades prefer not to make a distinction between mass organism and active minority, and speak instead of different organisational levels within the process of autonomy. This argument is not altogether without foundation, and in fact the two types of organisation can blend roles . The distinction makes sense in order to avoid certain arbitrary identification by militant "autonomists" with the organisms of the mass, and their consequent self-selection as vanguard. Direct action and the self-managed struggle of the workers is the only criterion for moments of organisation expressed directly by the masses. It is a question therefore of making a clear distinction between what is clearly expressed by the proletariat in struggle, and what are only very useful attempts to clarify and elaborate proposals.

The need for a continual up-dating of organisms gives space to opportunism, and one often hears even comrades who call for autonomy making such statements as, "We do not refuse to negotiate with employers in absolute, but accept to do so in situations where it leads to a recognition of gains already conquered through direct struggles", or, "Trade unionism can still be valid in backward situations, where it becomes in itself a step forward". Negotiation to legalise conquests is a contradiction in terms and seems to be an elegant reproposal of the principle of the delegate. The discourse on backward situations comes

to justify anything under the sun.

The work of the active minority is conditioned by the reality which surrounds them, but specific actions are still possible. Although carried out by a minority, these actions can, when drawn from thoroughly analysed experiences in other situations, carry information and forms of struggle susceptible to development, and possibilities of direct action where the industrial workers are a minority compared to the rest of the proletariat. It is a mistake to think that autonomy is a typical expression of the large factories in the North, and that it cannot be extended to other situations. Apart from the fact that autonomous action has certainly not yet taken the place of trade union illusions, that which is carried out is always action characteristic of a particular reality, and not the only expression of autonomy possible. It is moreover always susceptible to ulterior developments which are not always foreseeable.

It would be easy to say: trade unionism is still predominant, therefore I shall continue to move, even if only partly, within the trade union optic. Autonomy is an historical process, an objective reality in the course of development, and not a movement managed by so-called autonomous militants. The potential for a growth in autonomy always exists, even if it is repressed, and it is on this alone that we base our work.

Trade-unionism cannot be surpassed through the simple diffusion of propaganda of other positions aimed at dissuading the worker from belonging to the union (also because it is not enough to take away the trade unions for autonomous struggle to develop), but rather through the proposal of forms of struggle which the workers are receptive to, allowing the construction of more advanced bases. The self-reduction of the work pace, already common in certain factories in the North (where the struggle against the work pace has been the most advanced expression of autonomous activity), and also some in the South, represent, in this phase, the type of struggle which can come about through a qualitative change in the workers' consciousness, capable of reaching the point of total self-management of their own interests. One of the main tasks of the specific organism should be that of generalising and consolidating this and other forms of struggle as far as possible. These are proposals which can be made directly without the mediation of the shop stewards, trade union officials, or ideological militants, because they involve the working class at the place of exploitation itself and in what he knows best, his work. They avoid abstract, exhausting arguments with the Communist Party or groups, because, carrying the contradictions back to their original source, they allow the class to

make a clear choice of what their interests are, and thus create beyond any ideological discussion, the foundations for a mass confrontation with the trade unions and all the other repressive structures. They progressively introduce more advanced forms of direct action and tougher forms of struggle: sabotage, blockages, distribution of products in stock (or free distribution in suitable cases such as food products, etc,) without forcing the levels of consciousness. They also represent a way for predicting and combatting projects of redundancies and dependence on social security due to excess production: a defence of jobs managed directly by the workers without a supine acceptation of the work ideology. Obviously, the trade unions can also manage to repress these struggles, even opening disputes for the reduction of the work pace or even referring to "general themes of major importance", as on the other hand autonomous actions can be used as occasional supports for a single dispute. These dangers are always present, and it is useless to cry hot tears over the fact that an experience of direct action burns itself out, or that it does not immediately pass to higher levels, because the process of autonomy should be considered in its complexity, also at an international level, and not refer to one single experience.

It should be clear therefore, that the function of the active minority consists not so much of devising forms of struggle and objectives, as that of understanding the effective potential of the mass.

To explain better, we shall refer for a moment to the railway sector. It would be too easy, starting from the fact that a transport strike affects in the first place the passengers, to propose for example, a form of struggle based on not charging passengers for tickets, thus creating a unitary situation within the proletariat. Not that this is not in itself a valid hypothesis, but the problem lies not in the technical application of the proposal, but in the disposition of the mass (workers-proletarians-passengers) to lay the foundations for a combined practice of direct action which can only come about through a whole process which is open to error, crises of lack of self-confidence, or instrumentalisation. It would obviously be just as much a mistake to applaud every initiative on the part of the workers, always seeing in them possibilities for autonomous outlets.

It is necessary to refer not to a hypothetical level of perfection, but to the effective availability of the mass, which would mean in this case stimulating a process (which is in fact already happening) of re-appropriation in the territory, capable of linking up with the outlets in the

service industry.

The link with territory is not an epsodic factor, nor is it something due to particular circumstances. Exploitation is also expressed at the level of consumption (as well as at that of work), to which all the other political, social and cultural structures constituting the capitalist organisation of territory are related. The reality of consumption is therefore not secondary to that of production in the aims of the struggle, and one could say that the two are tending to synthesize in the territory, area of unification between proletariat both employed and unemployed, and where the main area of expression has been squatting, where there has also been a development of an autonomous female social role.

The appropriation of an autonomous social and economic role by women also opens the way for an autonomous sexual role. The proletarian woman, used to having to support the heaviest weight of capitalist exploitation at the point of consumption, has great fighting potential concerning the struggle in the territory, putting her in a position of avant-guarde in respect to the men. Some feminist projects which speak of self-management by women of their sexuality and form educational programmes in this direction, leave out of consideration the question of real appropriation, thus falling into an ideological situation and eventually finding themselves proposing only a more tolerable management of their sexual oppression. Besides, the most overtly reformist solutions (free abortion, play schools, creches, etc.) simply come to rationalise repression. The proposal of work for women is sometimes seen as an instrument of emancipation; but salaried work is not emancipation, but ulterior slavery and does not even create a weakening of family or social oppression. This does not mean that womens' liberation should be postponed to after the revolution. On the contrary, the female proletarian struggle in the territory, the appropriation of an economic and social role (and therefore of their sexual autonomy) by women, resolves immediate contradictions, as well as being at the same time a part of the revolutionary struggle for communism.

Also, leaving aside womens' struggle, the (useless) demand for infrastructures ("social salaries") represents a way of imposing a trade union logic in the living area (see disputes on housing supported by groups), a clear demonstration of imposing on proletarian reality. The work in the housing estates, if not set out on the basis of immediate contradictions, can easily end up in competition with the parish, evening classes, clinics, meals for proletarian children, and lots of people's parties, with the *Red Flag* in the place of hymns. There is nothing new in this:

competition with the parish is in the tradition of Italian reformism

Rent strikes, squatting, self-reduction of bills and transport charges, are all a defense of wages or living conditions, which also permit the unemployed to conquer a dignified level of existence during the struggle in the territory alongside the employed workers, and not through social security payments and subsidies, which are only instruments for dividing the proletariat.

The surpassing of trade-unionism is not therefore some ideological argument which is more or less revolutionary or more to the left, but is an historical necessity, the only way to rebuild, in the face of changed conditions, a defense of the immediate interests of the proletariat outside trade union negotiation and practice. The new data is no longer a question of struggle becoming finalised in disputes, but struggles which represent in their very form and development, the satisfaction of proletarian needs.

The defence of health in the factory is realised through the self-reduction of the work pace and the refusal of mobility, with systematic boycotts and sabotage of production and restructuring, preventing the employer from operating redundancies.

The indications we have glanced at are only a beginning, a first possible basis on which to act, but which already have the capacity to go beyond the purely defensive aspect, to lay the immediate foundations for the offensive. The self-managed struggle of the masses is therefore capable of uniting in one practice, both the problem of economic defence and that of revolutionary struggle in the long term, surpassing, through their actions and not through anti-reformist propaganda, trade union illusions and practice.

THE COMRADES OF KRONSTADT EDITIONS

WORKERS' COUNCILS, SELF-MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENTS IN PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY

What does the theory of workers' councils have to tell us today? Does it lead to a possible opening towards proletarian autonomy?

The comrades who have theorised this form of proletarian organisation have anything but a static or fixed vision, but they also see in the councils more than anything a form of organisation based on workers' self-management. The councils thus represent a workers' State, a dictatorship of the proletariat, a way in which the proletariat can exercise their class domination by being organised in such a way at the workplace (and we would add also in the territory).

What is the main idea on which they are based? The workers taking possession of the structures of production and the capitalist organisation of work, to develop a new mode of production.

In fact, in their conception of a communist economy, the councils do not manage to go beyond the limits within which they were born and which justify their existence, that is, the factory and the capitalist organisation of work and, leaving the form of production unaltered, succeed in only forming a different criterion of consumption.

Even the socialist society envisaged by the council communists bears a close resemblence to capitalism, and the calculation of the individual worker's consumption based on hours worked does not have the value of the break with wage earning which it professes to have, because in reality work remains a commodity no longer to be exchanged for money, but for another commodity.

The councils, in the period in which they developed all over Europe, created an unstable situation which on the one hand aimed at opposing the bourgeoisie in the factory, and on the other left the conditions of their existence unaltered, in other words continued the capitalist organisation of work.

The utopia of the councils is therefore the control of the State and the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, a State and bourgeoisie which they do not have the power to eliminate. They therefore stopped at the factory, competed with the bourgeoisie for power within the limits of their own boundaries.

In these terms the councils are only a form of counter-power, organised workers' power opposed to bourgeois power. The Marxist-Leninists have a good hand in criticising the theory and practice of counter-power, accusing it of reformism, saying that it is not a question of

opposing one form of power to another, but of taking away the bourgeoisie's instruments and establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat through the party, which can at most be assisted by the organizational forms of the workers' councils. In this way we find ourselves back in square one, back to the Bolshevik theories whose total inconsistence has been unequivocably demonstrated in other works by those who support workers' councils.

But one fact remains: that the councils, as a form of counter-power, cannot go beyond reformism, engaging themselves in a wearing struggle with the bourgeoisie without really questioning their existence. The councils would either end up exhausted, or give room to repression, as happened in Germany and Russia. Their limitations were clearly sensed by Lenin, who was clever enough not to attack them. He actually proclaimed them the supreme organs of power, being anxious to extend State power and that of the dominating class, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, personified in the Bolshevik party. The bloody repression in Germany and the bureaucratic involution in Russia have demonstrated the limitations of the council communist movement which takes the form of the extreme consequence of the syndicalist logic. The council communist movement undoubtedly represented an enormous qualitative jump compared to the syndicalist type of organisation but, like the trade unions, took for granted the existence of an employer with whom to negotiate. The councils therefore implicitly affirm the impossibility of going beyond the capitalistic organisation of work, and therefore the very reason for the existence of a bourgeoisie.

The expropriation and self-management of the means of production by the proletariat is an illusion: the means of production as such (machines, plants, etc.) are in reality transitory and perishable. These are constantly being updated within the capitalist organisation, and this includes the substitution of plants, readjustments, modifications and restructuring.

What the workers would really inherit in the case of an "expropriation" of the means of production is nothing other than the capitalistic organization of work and its logic of hierarchy and exploitation. To self-manage such a reality would create no substantial improvement for the worker, and the thought of working more or less the same way as before, even for the edification of the "socialist society", would be small consolation.

It is not by chance that "self-management" has been discussed or imposed in various bourgeois States (Switzerland, France) or pseudo soc-

ialist ones (Yugoslavia, Algeria), proposing to the proletariat their self-exploitation. Also, as we shall see further on, the structural foundations for a true discourse on self-management such as could be made at the beginning of the century are lacking. In either case therefore it would be a question of always pseudo forms of self-management, except for isolated cases of small industrial and agricultural complexes.

The only valid self-managed activity for the workers is therefore that of self-management of the struggle, that is, direct action.

It is therefore not a question of imposing oneself on capitalist structures in order to use them for socialist ends, but that of building new relationships between man and nature.

We are not speaking of simply making "a clean slate" of the past, because if the present structures are destroyed without creating something new, the most probable thing would be a return to the old models, even although with different labels.

The discourse therefore leads us to the problem of means and ends: if one acts in terms of disputes and the struggle for power (trade-unionism, workers' councils, counter-power), the result can only be a return to the point of departure. It is therefore necessary to synthesize the means with the ends desired, and construct the new social model now, in the struggles of the proletariat within the present society.

The council communists cannot manage to theorise any forms of proletarian struggle apart from the wildcat strike, not trade unionist perhaps in form, but in content because the significance of dispute and bargaining is implicit in the strike itself as a form of struggle. Even insurrection (armed struggle) does not always solve the problem because, taken in itself, it is only a way for some party, presumed representative of the proletariat, to reach power. Proletarian autonomy (intended as a real mass movement and not the label of an ideological grouping) has recently succeeded in imposing activities capable of going beyond disputes and trade unions in all their forms.

We hear of the struggle against production (self-reduction of the work pace, etc.), i.e. activities which represent the satisfaction of the workers' interests (health in the factory, the block against restructuring and therefore against redundancies, etc.) without having recourse either directly or indirectly to the mediation of the trade unions.

In this way the synthesis means-ends is achieved: the struggles are not finalised in claims or disputes, but attain their own ends directly, and are valid as such.

These struggles are revolutionary and communist even though they re-

present the defense of minor interests. They are going in the direction of the negation, through direct action and the collective responsibilisation of the proletariat concerning everyday problems, of capitalist organisation, and are negating it in its essential component, salaried work.

In the advancing of their autonomy the proletariat do not affirm themselves as a class, but deny and annul themselves as such, realising themselves fully as humanity, thus taking away from the bourgeoisie their only support, the subordinated class who work, produce, consume.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible because the proletariats' interest is to annul themselves as a class, to become humanity in the fullest sense of the word. An eventual would-be dictatorship of the proletariat (even if it were represented as "anti-State" or "from the base"), could not be exercised but by the "representatives" of the proletariat, presumed holders of their true essence and will.

The proletariat therefore struggle for their own interests, denying themselves as a class, and denying at the same time the entire capitalist system.

In the total refusal of the capitalistic organisation of work through direct action, the proletariat are elaborating socialist communist relations, the alternative social model. In other words, direct action is already communism, the self-construction by the proletariat of consciousness and communist organisation, new social relationships as an alternative to capitalism.

The acquisition of this capacity by the proletariat is the result of an historical process made up of numerous experiences, mistakes and theoretical sedimentation which the development of production relations has also influenced.

The production relations which existed at the beginning of the century, with work in the factory still skilled in part, allowed the worker a cultural space of his own, albeit it minimal. He had a self-awareness which made him feel bound to the work organization in such a way as to prevent him from realistically posing himself the problem of destroying it, but rather of taking possession of it himself. This figure of the worker first found expression in the trade unions, then in the coun cils, neither of which, as we have seen, have managed to break through the patterns of capitalism. If the Leninist and party experiences have nothing at all to do with the workers and constitute only a middle class interference, trade-unionism, syndicalism and workers' councils were

on the contrary experiences of proletarian autonomy, because they constituted the first basis for a distinction of class interests. It is not a question of refusing them, but of surpassing them as immature proletarian experiences.

Present production relations have destroyed all the proletariat's cultural space, and are continuing to do so in such a way that, in order to safeguard his humanity, the worker is obliged to employ his individual and collective intelligence against production and the capitalist organisation of consumption in the territory, the latter assuming an increasing importance in the present mechanism of exploitation.

In struggling against the organisation of production and consumption, the proletariat are creating new cultural space, new social relations in forms irreconcilable with capitalism.

This discourse has led many to declare that autonomy is a practice for the use and consumption of the so-called mass (unskilled) worker, and that, given that this figure is destined to disappear in favour of a return to skilled work due to restructuring it is necessary to form a new party or organization capable of becoming the "memory" of past experiences of struggle in order to re-elaborate them and give the proletariat new indications fitted to changed conditions.

This thesis does not bear certain elements in mind:

1) In recent years capitalist restructuring has already brought about important changes both in the organisation of production and the functioning of the work process. But these changes have always put an accent on mobility, applying it to the stratum generally considered to be technicians. One could say that the main aim of this restructuring is to be able to dispose of a vast stratum of interchangeable unskilled labour to be used for brief periods and at a very high work pace. This allows the capitalists to expel workers from the productive process not only through redundancies, but also through super-exploitation which pushes the workers to leave the work-place of their own accord. The presence of a vast stratum of unemployed then augments under-employment and under-payment in co-lateral productive activities (domicile workers, etc.). It should also be borne in mind that the continual readjustment of production being carried out by the capitalists at the present time requires a proletariat not tied to a precise way of producing, but who are able to adapt to the different systems put into effect (not always a question of technical innovation, but also restructuring with the aim of increasing repression). In this context skills and grades are only a means for dividing workers and stimulating collabora-

tion. Present restructuring therefore seems to be going against the criterion of skilled work, towards the extension of mobility, the jack of all trades, even in sectors which until recently were considered skilled. An elastic system of production cannot base itself on skilled work, because of the latter's static nature.

2) This reality renders trade union claims and disputes, with their adjacent forms of struggle (strikes, factory occupations, etc.) useless. These are instruments which cannot go beyond partial control or counter-power, in the face of a capitalism capable of totally controlling the management of production. Continual restructuring, with the dismembering of the factory environment, and work mobility, puts the worker in an unstable position and deprives him of any bargaining power whatsoever. For this reason proletarian autonomy has expressed itself in the struggle directly against production: self-reduction of the work pace, direct and immediate refusal of mobility and noxious work, boycotts and sabotage of production and restructuring, etc.. These struggles, begun organically in '67/'68 and first developed parallel to the "great disputes" and expiry of contracts, have increasingly been recognised by the proletariat as their only valid instruments of defense, not as a complement to, but as an alternative to trade unionsim. Struggles against production are not aimed at gaining bargaining power, but at contrasting, time after time, the employers' steps in increasing exploitation and decreasing labour. It is not by chance that the action of the trade unions today is that of suppressing these struggles, both through launching false programmes, and through overt repression.

3) Proletarian experiences, even if they wear themselves out, do not disappear entirely but sediment and change from one sector to another, hence we see how certain criteria of struggle applied in the factory are then generalised over the territory with analogical forms of struggle: squatting, self-reduction of rents, bills, fares, food prices, etc., valid also for the unemployed and the partly employed. The struggle against production therefore extends over the territory giving the unemployed and under-employed the possibility of fighting, not for an improbable job, but for a real defense of living standards. The thesis of the struggle against production obviously does not apply to the services (transport, hospitals, etc.) where the bourgeoisie have an interest in the existence of inefficient conditions. These are unproductive sectors which capitalism uses as channels for speculation.

4) Even a radical restructuring of capitalism could not destroy the sedimentation of the experiences of autonomous struggles. For ex-

ample, an elimination of the assembly line in favour of co-management or pseudo self-management of production could eliminate the specific struggle of the self-reduction of the work pace, but not certain criteria of direct action of which the reduction of the work pace would have left their seeds. That is to say, the proletariat possess a "memory" of their own, and therefore the development of class autonomy does not depend solely on the structural modifications of capitalism, but also on the experiences of autonomy accumulated beforehand. Forms of "self-management" and co-management exist already in certain situations, but it would be difficult for them to take on a general character.
5) The various parties and organizations who consider themselves the memory of the working class always tend to filter problems through the polaristic optic of power groups, thereby having a negative effect on the proletariat. This discourse obviously excludes the role of the active minority (or specific organisms), but rather addresses them towards acts of clarification, circulation of information and the generalisation of the experiences of direct action.

Apart from a few who say it is useless to waste time with autonomous struggles, believing that it is necessary to build the party and that this should not be distracted from by movement and turmoil, immediate struggles against production are almost unanimously accepted as valid by the so-called "area of autonomy".

These immediate struggles, although accepted, are nearly always interpreted as supports or colateral aspect of other "political" and organisational requirements: the 35 hour week, armed struggle, again again the party, factory and housing committees, also seen as organs of counter-power.

The objective of the 35 hour week, presented as a concrete "outlet" for the present struggles against production, represents the typical attitude of those who, wanting to coat their proposals with a touch of realism, finish up falling into the vague and incomprehensible.

The self-reduction in working hours could be an extremely valid form of struggle, similar to the immediate struggles we have already mentioned, but precisely for this reason it cannot be pinned down in one objective: why 35 hours and not, for example, 30? Who decides? The answer is clear: the potential of the class struggle in that particular situation, therefore a priori and theoretical decisions on such matters do not make sense.

The line of armed struggle (in the form of the military party) starts right away from a total lack of faith in the content of these struggles

and their only validity is seen in their potential for armed conflict. Certainly, workers' autonomy does pose the problem of violence, and one could say that all forms of autonomous action place themselves within the logic of violence and illegality. The problem is therefore not out of place, but the groups who propose such a line are constructing, through their own initiative, a practice of violence which they want to impose as the supreme outlet in the process of proletarian autonomy, thus electing themselves as managers and arbitrators. It is the discourse of the party once again, which, instead of moving along all the roads possible, bases itself on the military and insurrectional one.

Those who speak of the party are those who have the least faith in the possible generalisation of direct action and immediate struggle against production, defining these as contingent movements of little importance: a proletariat accustomed to confronting immediate problems directly and without a delegate is a very bad receiver of orders and directions, and difficult to subordinate to the will of a party.

Most common, however, are the positions of those who mean to organise proletarian autonomy in factory committees and inter-sectoral tenants' associations. Included in this category are those who consider the mass organism essential as a starting point for autonomous struggles, and those who measure the validity of a struggle by the organisation it leaves behind. The first therefore give precedence to the actions of co-ordination by the "vanguard" in the building of organisms, the second to the formation of organisms during the struggle. Often though the two positions combine, with various nuances.

The result of the first is a series of pseudo mass organisms (autonomous collectives, workers' committees and tenants' associations, which are usually called "organised proletarian autonomy") and which in reality are minorities (specific organisms), or quite simply political groups. The non-awareness of their role renders them substantially useless and also dangerous.

On the other hand the results of the second are usually delusions, in that the mass organisms, authentic expressions of the direct action of of the mass movement, are born, die or develop in the struggle and for the struggle, often without the practical possibility of characterising themselves or of being characterised as such, and therefore of becoming institutionalised in precise structures.

In general one could say that an organisational conception of proletarian autonomy is counter-productive and indirectly repressive in that it results in the constitution of the so-called committees of workers'

power and counter-power, whose only immediate possibility is that of acting as small alternative unions, and therefore of struggling in a game of escalation of claims and contracts with official unions.

In perspective, their optic of counter-power cannot lead other than to involvement in workers' councils and self-management. A possible council communist and self-managed neo-syndical road already defeated and surpassed by the experiences of the proletariat, would not today find even a structural base from which to draw a minimum of significance, and would find itself instrumentalised in the sense of a pseudo self-management.

In conclusion we can say that direct action is born from and develops on potential and levels of struggle, to verified from time to time. It can express itself minimally, just as it can reach high levels of class confrontation, but no one of these experiences can be caged within structures or patterns, in fixed programmes or objectives. On the contrary, what they leave behind is sedimentation for new and often unforseeable superior developments and autonomous organisational consciousness, communist social relations.

* * *

The shortcomings of council communism, its incapacity to go beyond competing for power with the brougeoisie in the factory without managing to put the existence of the latter in question, was also understood by a Russian anarchist current (the Dielo Truda) which in 1926 drew up an organisational platform mistakenly known as the "Archinov Platform".

In that was proposed the foundation of a specific anarchist communist political organisation which, parallel to the expropriation of the means of production by the proletariat organised in workers' councils, would take on the task of engaging the political super-structure, the State, in direct confrontation, and demolishing it. This conception of organisation (at two levels, one specific, political; the other at mass level) does not get to the roots of the shortcomings of council communism, and limits itself to trying to compensate for certain defects in action. It also introduces a series of ambiguous elements into the discourse alongside others which are extremely valid and interesting. This is not the place to go into the problems concerning the Dielo Trudo and organisation in general, but we should like to make a few points on the subject.

The complexity of bourgeois power is not finalised in the organised violence of the State. Not only is it not enough for the proletariat to expropriate the means of production in order to eliminate bourgeois power, but even the immediate liquidation of the State would not solve the problem. As we have already seen, the principle support of bourgeois power in its economic and state forms, is the acceptation by the proletariat of their role as such. For this reason, in order to deny and annul bourgeois power the proletariat must in the first place annul themselves as a class, to realise themselves fully as humanity through the construction of direct action and communist relations.

This theme is alluded to more than once in the platform, but is not carried to its logical conclusion. The reason can be found in the weakest point of the platform, the unaware acceptation of certain Leninist principles. It is not a question of authoritarianism (as some anarchists think), but of making reference to a theory outside the proletariat, that is, to an ideology; this was elaborated for the first time precisely by Lenin, with his thesis of the party as a consciousness outside the class.

It is exactly the transposition of the platform on to an ideological level which has pushed the instigators of the platform to try to go beyond the limitations of the council communist movement, not in the direction of the mass potential for direct action, but through the political action of anarchist communist militants with a strong libertarian ideology, but whose terms become vague and unclear.

THE COMRADES OF KRONSTADT EDITIONS

M.A.B.: Movimento Autonomo di Base (Autonomous Workers' Movement), of the railway workers in the Turin region.

[1] S.F.I.: Sindacato Ferrovieri Italiani (Italian Railwaymens' Union), linked to the C.P. dominated C.G.I.L.

[2] S.A.U.F.I.: Sindacato Autonomo Unitario Italiano (Autonomous Unitarian Italian Union), linked to Christian Democrat dominated C.I.S.L.

[3] S.I.U.F.: Sindacato Italiano Unificato Ferrovieri (Italian Unified Railwaymens' Union), linked to the U.I.L. (predominantly Socialist Party).

[4] F.I.S.A.F.S.: Federazione Italiana Sindacati Autonomi Ferrovieri di Stato.(Italian Federation of Autonomous State Railwaymens' Unions), autonomous union with no direct links with the larger confederations.

ORGANIZATION OF THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS

The present situation is characterised by an alliance between employers, trade unions and reformist parties.

The first are using the help of the unions and so-called parties of the Left in order to continue exploitation, finding a way to make the workers pay the price of the economic crisis through a considerable sum of money paid to the industrialists by the State, thereby allowing them to survive for a few more years. To complete the picture, the parties of the Left, (with the Communist Party in the lead) are asking the working class to make sacrifices in order to save the employers and their servants.

The present characteristic of the unions and reformist parties is therefore that of *collaboration* with the employers; their most important task is that of extinguishing the spontaneous workers' movement, suggesting sacrifice and condemning the workers who are disposed to carrying on a tougher form of struggle with the ususal slanders (calling them provocateurs).

Under these conditions it does not seem to us that the trade union can be used as *an instrument of struggle.*

The three main unions, the SFI, SAUFI and the SIUF are putting their collaboration into effect by selling out the railway workers through a project of restructuring which means a heavier workload for those employed (*increased productivity*), with less money (*wage blocks*), and an increase in unemployment.

These anti-worker objectives are backed up by demagoguery and a strong condemnation of any initiative. In this way they want to get the proposal accepted that management cannot take on wage increases, that to keep up productivity the number of working hours must remain unaltered, that the so-called phenomenon of absenteeism must be fought, and that to control the worker better the process of functional skills and work mobility will have to be re-organised.

Clearly they want to destroy all will to struggle, creating a financial situation which is unsupportable for most, hence the recourse to overtime, giving the bosses the arm of blackmail perfected by the use of the selective mechanism which stops anyone who is not *capable and disciplined* from getting on (in other words, whoever does not let himself be used and who refuses absolute respect for the bosses).

THE AUTONOMOUS UNION, FISAFS, is developing a struggle in opposition to the three central trade unions, and claims to be autonomous.

The FISAFS is trying to exploit the rage and discontent of the workers in order to gain a mass adhesion to its corporative and reactionary line. The trade-unionism of this so-called autonomous organisation is an ulterior element in retarding the real possibility of workers' struggle at the base, which is very strong at the present time. The aim of the FISAFS is therefore that of channelling the workers into a corporative logic necessary for the industrialists, political parties, the government and capitalism, in order to consolidate exploitation and make it last.

The FISAFS therefore, in defending the employers' interests, cannot possibly employ the methods of struggle which characterise and qualify workers' autonomy. At the level of alliances and political decisions, it becomes impossible for the FISAFS to differentiate itself from the other union organisations who are in opposition to the three central majority-holding unions (for example, the USFI-CISNAL).

TRUE PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY is the only possible solution for the continuation of the struggle against the employers and their servants. To do this it is necessary to begin to form *Autonomous Workers' Nuclei*. These nuclei, such as those we want to create among the Turin railway workers, are born from within a precise productive reality, and should consider themselves a constant point of reference for the reality outside in the living areas, the land, the schools and so on, and draw them into the struggle.

Beginning from a clear conception of proletarian autonomy, two dangers ever present in sectoral or trade union methods of struggle are eliminated:

a) the bureaucratisation of the structure;

b) the tendency towards a corporate vision of the struggle.

THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS organises itself autonomously of the political parties and trade unions, in order to better defend the worker as a man. Its perspective of organisation and struggle keep in mind the double necessity of imposing the confrontation both at the level of production (wages, contracts, etc.), and at the level of the individual worker's life (work risks, alienation, necessary links between living area, place of work, school, etc.).

Autonomy is therefore a re-evaluation of the man in the worker, with a clear view of the struggle directed towards safeguarding the conditions which render possible work and life itself.

THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS

A) CHARACTERISTICS

– Is an organisation which means to distinguish itself from the trade unions including the autonomous versions of such.

– Its autonomy is based on an anti-bureaucratic structure.

– It is based on the elimination of the permanent delegate and the negation of professional representatives.

– All the workers are engaged in the struggle against the employers and their servants.

– This involvement in the struggle is permanent and does not limit itself to the strike periods fixed by the trade unions.

– Each component of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus considers himself to be in continual struggle against the employers and his servants, in the same way as the latter are continually in struggle against the workers in their attempt to per-

petuate exploitation.
– The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus has no link with trade union ideology or practice, while its anti-employer position qualifies it clearly and without doubt as *an instrument which the workers have created for their own emancipation.*
– Propaganda activity and struggles directed at obtaining precise results, and the choice of means for the realization of these struggles, are all elements to be clarified by the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus.
– To belong to an Autonomous Workers' Nucleus is the logical step for all those who consider they have been betrayed by the various trade union organisations and who want to continue the struggle against the State-employer, widening this struggle in a perspective totally different to that of trade union power.

B) METHODS

– The repression put into effect by the employers with the help of their servants is *constant*. It is exercised over us in many ways: diminishing the spending power of wage increases; refusing legitimate increases; putting pressure on the worker to avoid taking on more personnel, increasing work risks; nullifying our struggles through the unions' politics of recuperation. This repression must be fought with a struggle which is also *constant*. Therefore: permanent repression, permanent conflict.
– The comrades making up the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus should have a clear idea of the direction the struggle against exploitation should take. The employer strikes the worker as a part of a whole (the productive collectivity), therefore when it strikes him as a railway worker, the company adapts its exploitationn to the general situation of production. For this reason a sectoral and corporative struggle does not make sense. The method of workers' autonomy is based on *exporting* the struggle, even if the immediate effects (economic and work conditions) remain within the sector of production.
– The method is therefore that of permanent conflict and carrying the struggle beyond the workplace.
– The objectives to be reached outside the workplace are the users of the railway service, especially commutors who must be constantly kept up to date with the evolution of the conflict within the company; and the same for the other sectors of production nearest to that of the railways (airways, road transport, postal services, telephones, contracting sectors, etc.).
– Hence the great importance of *information* in the autonomous organisation of the struggle. Obviously in the beginning the means available for this method of struggle will be inadequate compared to those of the trade union confederacy; however, even having recourse to leafletting, what matters most is working in the right direction, intervening constantly towards the users who must gradually be sensitized to the struggle of the railway workers and our perspectives. The same goes for the colateral sectors with whom it is necessary to make contact, favouring, whenever possible, the birth of other autonomous nuclei which can do the same

kind of work.
– In this perspective the strike maintains its validity as a means of struggle, but must be seen critically, not as a means which automatically sets conflict in motion whenever the trade union leadership decides. The strike in that sense becomes an instrument which puts an end to a situation of conflict, and is thus useful to the employers and all those who have an interest in extinguishing concrete struggle.
– Another element against the strike as a means of struggle is the fact that it is an intermittent instrument which the counterpart is always warned about in advance, enabling them to intervene (for example, reducing personnel from goods trains and transferring them to passenger ones).
– Other means exist which can be used alongside the strike, or in the place of it, means which attack the company's productive output directly and which constitute a very effective threat.
– During a strike the technical procedure is arranged at union meetings. Reading these rules, one is amazed by the care which is taken to avoid any damage to the company. But, in the other direction, what does the company do to try to reduce the exploitation of the workers? All these precautions reduce the effectiveness of the strike as an arm in the attack against the bosses, and the responsibility for all that is also due to the legalism and conservatism of the unions. To hard and constant repression, we must oppose struggle without half measures and without warning: hard and constant struggle.
– The choice of means to be employed in a certain struggle, and the basic direction to be given to the information which has to be constantly circulated towards the exterior, is decided upon by all those who belong to the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus, for which they must meet periodically.

C) PERSPECTIVES

– The concrete development of the struggle must be evaluated from time to time in the light of the objective situation, and not serve as a shield for vague and irresolute ideological constructions.
– Wage increase is one of the most important points of the struggle, because it allows the worker a greater capacity for resistance and the possibility of facing other battles which are just as important for his existence. This is not necessarily the main point of the Autnomous Workers' Nucleus, but, for obvious reasons it cannot be considered of secondary importance.
– The struggle for a different organisation of work is undoubtedly more interesting, because it indirectly supplements real wages in a way that cannot be taken back by the mechanism of devaluation. These indirect supplements to wages are elements of great value during the course of the conflict. A reduction in working hours, the refusal of mobility or accumulation of duties, total staff coverage, the improvement of working conditions, the modification of rules and working hours for drivers, ticket collectors, etc., the strengthening of installations, lines, locomotives, carriages, etc. are all elements which improve the general situation of the railway wor-

ker and can come to be a part of *real wages* which are very much inferior to the sum written on the pay slip.

– The basic perspective in which a long-term struggle could be planned would be that of the base of the workers getting control of management, progressively removing it from the bosses and foremen who find themselves in secure positions with the unions' approval. In this way an example could be given, through a *series of proposals re changes in management*, and the *organisational capacity of the workers*, denouncing those responsible for the present disservice at the cost of the passengers and everyone involved.

– Capillary penetration in order to explain the mistaken position of the trade union struggles and their need to collaborate with the company, the impossibility of any change in this situation in the near future, and a return to struggle at the base. Struggle against the trade union structures and bureaucrats, not against union members.

– The final perspective is therefore that of autonomous management of the struggle, both for wages and working conditions, as well as the progressive taking over of management in its totality. Clearly this autonomy of struggle can only develop through a proper evaluation of the unions' position of collaboration with the employers.

CONCLUSION

THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS is an organism of struggle for the defense of the railway workers who mean to affirm the *principle of autonomous struggle*. For this reason it denies the validity of the trade unions, and denounces their collusion with the system.

On the basis of the principle of autonomy, the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus affirms the need for *permanent conflict* within the reality of production, and the need to *export* the essential characteristics of the struggle towards the exterior. The objectives of this communication with the exterior are the users of the railway service and the co-lateral productive sectors.

The methods necessary for the realisation of the defense of those involved and therefore of the whole productive collectivity are chosen in harmony with the principle of autonomy and permanent conflict. The validity of the *strike* should be examined critically, and a great deal of attention paid to the research for *other effective forms of struggle* not so easily controllable by the company.

The perspectives of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus are the constant ones of *increasing wages and affecting working conditions*, with the aim of safeguarding *real wages* which is the basis for all concrete possibilities of struggle by the workers.

MAB--Turin

The road ahead of the proletariat is blocked: the reformist parties, trade unions and employers have coalesced to obstruct any growth in the level of the struggle, or any conquests which could lead to a revolutionary transformation of production relations.

The proletariat have only one alternative: that of building communism directly, passing over the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic structures. In order to do this we must provide analyses of and realise in practice, elements organised by the base at the level of production: autonomous workers' nuclei.

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